

November 2015

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT.

Location: 44 Downshire Hill, London NW3

Design Brief.

The current proposal is in two parts.

1. To carry out major engineering works to stabilize the building by underpinning the main walls and replace the existing inadequate foundations.
2. To take the opportunity afforded by these works to take down and rebuild the small front lobby and main entrance steps to stop water leaking into the lobby and to replace the main drainage under.

Existing Situation.

The building is Grade II listed traditionally constructed early 19C 4 storey attached dwelling located in a Conservation Area. The existing property has been owned and occupied by the same family since 1983 and has been monitored for known structural inadequacies for that period.

Since 1983 adjacent properties, #43, part #45 and St John's Church have also been the subject of subsidence and structural failure and have been underpinned and repaired.

#44 is the last building in the attached group not to be underpinned. The underpinning and stabilisation of the adjacent buildings has in consequence amplified the effects of the continued subsidence taking place in #44.

After a period of relatively stability for some 4 years there has been an increasing rate of settlement and cracking over the last year. The Owners of the building are now in a position to move out of the property for the 6 months required to carry out the works commencing in January.

Proposed Design and Works.

The garden floor will be stripped out with the main historic staircase protected and supported while the works are taking place.

The original riven York paving to the front yard and the cut York steps will be removed, indexed and stored in the rear yard for the duration and replaced in the same pattern as original.

The front steps and lobby will be partially demolished and the main drainage running along under the garden floor passage will be removed and replaced.

The main walls will be underpinned and the opportunity taken to lower the Garden floor level by 340mm to allow for adequate ceiling heights for that floor. Currently the historic subsidence in the NE rear corner has allowed for a decrease in ceiling height of 150mm maximum to 1920mm. The floor reduction would give an increased ceiling height of 2310mm in that area.

The existing kitchen will be replaced in the same location.

The front porch and steps will be rebuilt as a waterproof insulated shell with a replacement external skin the same as now exists. The front yard stone and steps will be reinstated as now.

The only differences visible externally at the front will be a lowered well in front of the Garden floor lobby entrance door with the addition of two extra steps and the lowered lobby service door itself.

There would be no other external alterations to the front entrance area and there will be no changes to the rear façade.

There will be no alterations to the upper floors. The existing historic coverings on the ground floor will be protected and retained. There will be some stitch repairs required to the main structural ground floor walls to eliminate major cracks.

The building will be crack repaired and redecorated internally.

The floor lowering of the Garden floor level will necessitate the lowering and repositioning of the single door from the hall into the rear family room and the installation of two steps to the rear of the Garden floor side passageway.

Sustainability.

The proposed development will stabilise the building structure and conserve the integrity of the building fabric.

The rebuilding of the front lobby will weatherproof that area and increase the thermal efficiency of that part of the building fabric.

The existing stone paviors and steps will be re-used

It is considered that these necessary remedial works adhere to the principles of sustainable development and promote environmental sustainability.

Impact on adjacent properties.

There will be some impact on the adjacent fabric of #45 during the works as the party wall on that side will be underpinned. #45 is also in the ownership of the Applicants. There will be little impact on #43 as the party wall on that side has already been underpinned. Any vibration will be minimised during construction as most of the works are hand works with only small plant used to minimise vibration and minimise consequent damage to the existing fabric of #44. The works have to be carried out as gently as possible.

After the works are completed there will be no visible changes to the property apart from the two extra sunken front steps and a side service door and frame lowered 320mm.

Access.

Access will be the same as previous with 10 rather than 8 steps down to the service door. The main front door access will be unchanged.

Conclusions.

The proposed works have been planned for some time and the recent measured movements, together with have the building able to be vacated for 6 months means this is the best time to carry out the works before further damage occurs.

Full Building Regulations approvals will be obtained and the works will be carried out by Claymore Design and Build Ltd and supervised by Scott MacGregor who has been monitoring the building for the last 30+ years.